

NO PLAYS EXCHANGED

Bugbee's Popular Plays

Hiram and the Peddlers

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BY

WILLIS N. BUGBEE

Price 25 Cents

The Willis N. Bugbee Co.
SYRACUSE, N. Y.

21


Bugbee's Popular Plays

Hiram and 
 the Peddlers

BY
WILLIS N. BUGBEE

*Author of "Coonville 'Ristocrat Club," "Uncle Ephraim's
Summer Boarders," "Jolly Dialogues," "Humorous
Homespun Dialogues," "Uncle Si and the
Sunbeam Club," etc., etc.*

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Hiram and the Peddlers

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CHARACTERS

HIRAM PRINGLE..... *A Well-to-do Bachelor Farmer.*
DEACON PETTINGILL..... *A Victim of Hay Fever.*
JONATHAN OBADIAH GREEN..... *A Book Agent.*
PERCY BINGS..... *A Distributor of Perfumes, etc.*
PAT MCGINNIS..... *The New Hired Man.*
JANE PRINGLE *HIRAM's Maiden Sister.*
SALLY BROWN *HIRAM's Old Sweetheart.*

PLACE:—*Hiram's Home.* TIME:—*Early Summer.*

TIME OF PLAYING: *About 30 minutes.*

COSTUMES.

HIRAM wears ordinary farmer's work clothes—no coat or vest, large straw hat, etc. Supposed to be about 50 years of age.

DEACON wears coarse slouchy clothing, old soft hat, old-fashioned glasses, and walks with aid of cane. About HIRAM's age and a victim of hay fever and rheumatism.

BOOK AGENT wears dark clerical suit and high silk hat.. He carries two books of same size.

PERCY wears business suit and carries a case filled with bottles of "Perfume," Hair Renewer, etc.

PAT wears blue overalls, colored work shirt, large straw hat, etc.

JANE wears morning work dress, large apron, etc.

MISS BROWN wears very plain suit and hat, and carries magazines under her arm. She appears to be a little under 50 years of age.

OCT 13 1916

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Hiram and the Peddlers

SCENE: *A plain living room. JANE is discovered putting things to rights. (ENTER HIRAM, with piece of harness and string.)*

HIRAM *(singing)*.

"Oh, where, oh, where is my little dog gone?

Oh, where, oh, where can he be?

With his tail cut short and his--

JANE. What's the matter now, Hiram?

HIRAM. Nothin' only this tormented old harness up an' busted an' I've got to set down an' fix it 'fore I can go to plowin' agin.

JANE. It does seem to me that harness of yours is breakin' all the time.

HIRAM. Yep, I guess 'tis. It's gettin' purty old an' rotten, that's what's the trouble with it. Say, if any of them peddlers of yourn come along with harnesses just let me know an' mebbe we can make a dicker.

JANE. I've never seen any of 'em with harnesses yet. They have most everything else. Yesterday there was a perfect stream of peddlers, one right after the other. Jest as fast as one could get out of the gate another was bangin' away to get in. First was a man sellin' a patent mop wringer, then a woman with corsets, next was a soap peddler, then a rag peddler, an insurance agent, an' I don't know what all. I don't know for my part how they all get a livin'.

HIRAM. Neither do I if nobody patronizes 'em any more'n you do.

JANE. How can I? If I was to buy something of every peddler that comes along, we'd both on us be in the poor house.

HIRAM. Fiddlesticks! That's sayin' a good deal, Jane.

JANE. Wal, figger it out for yourself. There was seventeen of 'em here yesterday by actual count.

HIRAM. Great Jupiter! Seventeen in one day! Say, say if you warn't my own sister I'd say you was as bad as Lige Wheeler with his fish yarns.

JANE. Wal it's a fact because I kept tally. It took me more'n half the time runnin' after them peddlers. I dunno how I'll ever get my bakin' done to-day if they keep comin' as fast as they did yesterday, There's been one here already this mornin'.

HIRAM. Never mind, you go right along about your bakin' an' I'll attend to the peddlers for a spell. It'll take me an hour or two to mend this harness an' I might's well be seein' to them at the same time. It'll be a sort of diversion.

JANE. It'll be more of a diversion than you're countin' on, I'm thinkin', but 'tany rate I'll take you at your word, only don't let 'em coax you into buyin' every thing that comes along.

HIRAM. Don't worry. I cal'late I'll keep 'em on the move an' I won't buy nothin' we don't want either. Trust your brother Hiram for that.

(Sound of whistling outside).

JANE. Hark! like enough that's one a comin' now. I'll go right along to my bakin'. (*Exit R.*)

(*Loud knock at the door, L.*)

(*Enter BOOK AGENT*)

BOOK AGENT. (*lifting hat*). Ah, good morning, sir. Have I—ah the pleasure of addressing Mr. Pringle?

HIRAM. I dunno jest how much of a pleasure 'tis, but that's my name—Hiram for short.

B. A. (*advancing and shaking hands*). Glad to make your acquaintance, Mr. Pringle. Your friend, Judge Brown, tells me you are one of the most influential men of this neighborhood.

HIRAM. Jedge Brown told you that, eh? He's usually considered purty good authority. Anyways, I try to live respectable an' keep out of debt an' out of jail an' that's about as much as any man can do. But what's your name may I ask?

B. A. I am the Rev. Jonathan Obadiah Greene, D. D. L. L. D., Ph. D.,—

HIRAM. And X. Y. Z? then you're a minister, be you?

B. A. Well-er-not exactly at the present time—that is, I've resigned to take up missionary work.

HIRAM. An' so you think I'm in need of a little missionary work, eh? Haw! haw!

B. A. Hardly that, but we need your influence. If you will listen to me I will explain my mission in a very few words. (*Draws chair close to HIRAM and proceeds with speech which he emphasizes with appropriate gestures*)

In our country to-day, as you know, there are a great many unmarried ladies—"bachelor maids," if you please, or as some vulgar people would say, "*old maids.*" On the other hand there are a great many unmarried men, or as some would say, "*old bachelors.*" I've no doubt you have both varieties right here in this community. Now my idea is to get these people together—to wed and make happy homes for each other, thus overcoming a great deal of poverty, misery and lonesomeness. To further this great plan I have written a very comprehensive treatise upon the subject, to which I have added chapters on "*Love and Courtship,*" "*How to propose,*" "*How to accept a Proposal,*" etc., etc. (*Shows book as he talks*). Now here is a picture of a young man in the very act of proposing to a winsome young lady. And here is another one of a happy family circle. It's my opinion that after one has read this book through from cover to cover that he will not wish to remain longer in single blessedness. (*turns pages*) Look at the names of some of those who have offered testimonials. (*Reads*) Theodore Roosterfelt,———, ———, ———. (*Supply local names*). Now right here is the place for your name, sir. (*holds pencil*).

HIRAM. But I—I—gosh ding it—I—

B. A. Ah you need your glasses, I see. Perhaps these are yours here on the table. (*Hands glasses to HIRAM*). Sign right there below the Judge's name please. (*Forces pencil into HIRAM's hand; HIRAM writes*). That's right. And now that I happen to have two

copies of the book with me I am going to leave this one with you, thus avoiding any further calls for delivery and collection.

HIRAM. How much do I have to pay for it?

B. A. Ah, pardon my oversight in not mentioning the price before. The regular price for this binding is \$5.50, but as you are one of the first subscribers in this community I am going to make you a special price of \$5.25.

HIRAM. (*taking money from pocket book*). Whee! strikes me that's a purty big price for a book of that size. I can buy one of them dictionaries that Daniel Webster wrote for two dollars an' it's nigh onto five times as big as this.

B. A. But you must consider the value of this work, sir,— the fine illustrations, the elegant binding, etc. I'm sure that after you've read it through a couple of times you'll say it is worth double the money.

HIRAM. Mebbe you're right, I dunno, Here's the money. (*Hands money*).

B. A. Thank you, sir. Now I must be off. Good-day, sir. (*Exit L.*)

HIRAM. Wal, I'll be blamed if I didn't get took in by the fust peddler that come along. But I won't say a word to Jane about it or she'll pester the life out of me. (*Looks at book*). "A Happy Married Life" Haw! Haw! I cal'late that feller didn't know that I'm one of them "old bachelors" he tells about. (*Knock at door*). Hello! here's somebody else a-comin'.

(Enter DEACON PETTINGILL).

DEACON. Howdy do, Hiram. I'll walk right in 'thout waitin' for sarymony.

HIRAM. That's right, Deacon, long's it's you. I thought mebbe 'twas one of them pesky peddlers. They're thickern' fleas on a dog nowdays.

DEACON. Thought I was a peddler, hey? That's a good one. Ho! ho! he! he! (*Laughs heartily ending in a fit of coughing and sneezing*).

HIRAM. Wal, how be ye, Deacon? How's the world a-usin' you?

DEACON. Oh, I'm purty well 'ceptin' for the sciatic rheumatiz in the left leg an' a leetle hay fever an' occasional touches of the asthma. If 'twan't for them I'd feel as chirp as a cricket.

HIRAM. I should think mebbe ye might if 'twarn't for so many ailments.

DEACON. Ye—es, I guess I would. How's the farm work comin' on, Hiram?

HIRAM. It's doin' fust-rate now, all except the hired man.

DEACON. Yes, I heerd you had a new hired man. Purty good worker, eh?

HIRAM. Good worker? Haw! haw! Say, Deacon, he don't know as much about farmin' as a two-year old baby. Sent him out to milk the cows 'tother day an' what d'ye s'pose? Found him out thar pumpin' old Spot's tail up an' down as fast as he could make

it go.

DEACON. Warn't gettin' much milk was he? Ho! ho! he! he! he! he! (*Ends with another fit of coughing and sneezing*).

HIRAM. I'm hopin' he'll do better some time. "A poor beginning makes a good endin'," they say.

DEACON. An' how's Jane gettin' along? Purty well, I s'pose?

HIRAM. Purty fair to middlin'. She's out doin' her bakin' while I'm in here shooin' off the peddlers. But speakin' of peddlers, I'll be blamed if I don't believe that's one comin' up the 'road now with his satchel.

DEACON. That bein' the case I cal'late I'd better go out an' visit with Jane for a spell. I never had much use for peddlers—they've got too much gab to suit me. (*Hobbles off stage toward R just as PAT enters with hat full of eggs. In the collision which follows PAT nearly spills the eggs*).

PAT. Och, worry, worry! Yez nearly spilt me eggs entoirely, yez old gossoon.

DEACON. Wal, consarn ye! Can't ye see where you're a goin' to?

PAT. Jist pwhat I was thinkin' about yersilf, sor.

DEACON. (*raising cane*). If 'twan't for my rheumatiz I'd give ye a whack over the head with this cane.

PAT. Begorra, thin I'm mighty glad yez have got the rheumatiz.

DEACON. What's that? You're glad I've got the rheumatiz? I'll—I'll—(*Starts after him but begins to cough and sneeze*).

PAT. Begorra, yez betther postpone the job or ye'll be snazin' your head clane off, thot yez will.

(*Exit DEACON, L., sneezing*).

HIRAM. What do you want now, Pat?

PAT. I jist want to ax if I'll be afther settin' the leetle white hin or that big yellow wan wid the red thing on the top iv her head.

HIRAM. Set the white one of course. The other one's a rooster you greeny.

PAT. Och, worry! An' so the big wan is a rooster. I do be larnin' some thing new ivery day. I'll jist remember thot—the big wan is a hin an' the little wan is a rooster.

HIRAM. No, no, I said the big one was a rooster? Can't you get anything through your head?

PAT. Yis, yis, now I know. The little one is a hin an' the big wan is a rooster. I'll jist remember thot. (*Exit singing*).

HIRAM. The idee of settin' a rooster! (*Knock*) Come in.

(*Enter PERCY BINGS*)

PERCY. Good morning. Are you the lady—I mean is the lady of the house at home this morning?

HIRAM. Wal no, not exactly, as you might say. My sister's engaged. Anything I can do for ye?

PERCY. I usually prefer to see the ladies.

HIRAM. Jest so, but when you can't see 'em what're ye goin' to do? She's purty busy this mornin' an' besides she ain't feelin' jest right—that is towards peddlers.

PERCY. Too bad. You see I am representing one of the largest perfumery establishments in the country. We are distributing samples of our new "Hollyhock Bouquet," to a few select families in each neighborhood. (*Removes cork and holds to Hiram's nose*). Now just smell of this. Isn't that delicious?

HIRAM. It might do for the wimmen folks, but I wouldn't give two cœnts for a ton of it. I'd ruther smell fresh clover most any day.

PERCY. My, the women just fall in love with it. Now this would make a delightful present for your wife.

HIRAM. My sister, you mean.

PERCY. Why yes—of course, I mean your sister. She'll be perfectly charmed with it. (*Sees book*). By the way, I notice by the title of this book that you're interested in a very delicate subject.

HIRAM. I'm interested to the extent of five dollars.

PERCY. I understand. Of course it's a secret. Nearly all of us are in love at sometime. Love is a great thing. As one man has said "Love is the greatest thing in the world." (*Takes another bottle from case*). Now this bottle will be just the thing for your fair lady.

HIRAM. Consarn ye, who said I was in love?

PERCY. Oh nobody. I just surmised it. And there's another thing I've noticed since I've been talking with you—you're beginning to have a few gray hairs at the temples. Gray hairs are a nuisance. You should have a bottle of my wonderful Egyptian Hair Renewer. (*Takes bottle and sponge from case*). It's a very simple remedy. Just apply with a sponge like this (*demonstrating on Hiram's head*) once a month, that's all. It's the greatest thing in the world to restore hair to its natural color, keeps it from falling out, makes it glossy as silk, no oil required. (*Stands back and looks at Hiram*).

There! you look at least ten years younger. Now that makes just two dollars for the perfume and one dollar for the Hair Renewer, or three dollars in all.

HIRAM. But I thought you said you were distributing the perfumery free gratis.

PERCY. So I did. The perfumery is free but I get one dollar apiece for the bottles and mighty cheap at that. Almost like cut glass. The ladies'll be mighty glad to get them, I know. (*Hands card*). Here's my card if you need any more of my wonderful Hair Renewer. Now soon's you give me the three dollars I'll be going because every body's crazy about this "Hollyhock Bouquet." (*HIRAM hands money*). Thank you, sir. Good-day. (*Exit*).

HIRAM. Blast his hide! Here I am taken in by another peddler. Paid three dollars for a lot of tom

foolery not wuth over ten cents at the most. I'll have to hide 'em, so Jane won't see, and I'll never let it happen again. (*Sound outside*).

(*Enter PAT*).

What's the matter now, Pat?

PAT. Och, I clane forgot which wan yez said was the rooster.

HIRAM. Didn't I tell ye the big one was the rooster—the one that says, "Cock-a-doodle-doo."

PAT. Yis, yis, so yez did. I'll remimber nixt toime. (*Starts to go*). Faix, misther Pringle, I jist want to be tellin' yez a secret. Thot ould guy wid the rheumatiz an' the epizootic is out there a sparkin' wid your sister an' their heads are jist so near together (*measures*) an' I'll bet me shoes they're agoin' to kiss each other before they're done wid it. I jist thought I'd be afther givin' yez warnin'.

HIRAM. Jest what I thought the old fool was after.

PAT. (*looking at book*). Begorra, thot's jist pwhat I wud be wantin' mesilf—"A Happy Married Loife, an' How to Reach It." Some toime wud yez be lettin' me rade it whin yez get through wid it yourself?

HIRAM. Hush, Pat! Don't tell anybody an' I'll let you take it.

PAT. All right. I'll not mintion it at all, at all, not even to your sister, be dad.

HIRAM. For heaven's sake, don't mention it to her anyway. I don't want her to know it.

PAT. Faix, an' I'll niver open me mouth. If she an' the old guy wid the rheumatiz got hold iv it they'd be radin' it the hull blissed toime, I'm thinkin'. Och here be some-body comin' so I'll be off. (*to himself*). The big hin is a rooster an' the little wan is the settin' hin. (*Exit singing*).

(*Enter SALLY BROWN*).

MISS B. Ah, good morning. I was just admiring your beautiful home as I came in. It reminds me so much of my childhood home with the honeysuckles and the roses climbing over the porch. It just makes me think of what Mr. Shakespeare or some body else wrote in one of their poems:

"You may break, you may shatter the
vase if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang
round it still."

HIRAM. Wal, we think a good deal of our old home ourselves, sister and I, but we ain't thought much about what the poets said. Don't have time.

MISS B. I suppose not. Farmers are always so busy in summer and then in winter when they do get the time the posies are all gone. Seem's if things were just turned around wrong end to.

HIRAM. I ain't much of a hand to complain. I take things as they come. But 'fore we go any farther with this here conversation I'd kinder like to know what you're a sellin' of. Hain't got a book that tells how to make money grow on bushes, or a medicine

to make an old feller grow young agin, or mebbe you're distributin' free samples of something or other, an' sellin' the bottles to keep it in.

MISS B. Really you must excuse me. I was so taken up with your cozy home that I actually forgot my errand. I am taking subscriptions for the "Woman's Suffrage Advocate." Do you believe in womens' suffrage, may I ask?

HIRAM. I don't believe in any body's sufferin' any more'n they're obleeged to, but I s'pose the wimmen have got jist as much right to suffer as the men folks if they want to.

MISS B. He! he! he! I see you're quite a hand to joke. What I mean is—are you in favor of women voting?

HIRAM. Oh, thats a different question, but fur's I'm consarned I won't hinder 'em.

MISS B. Then I see you're not opposed to it and I'm sure you'll like to be a subscriber to the Woman's Suffrage Advocate. You may place your name right here. (*Hands paper and pencil*).

HIRAM. Gee Whillikins! Does that mean another five dollars? I jest paid five dollars for the privilege of signin' my name.

MISS B. Oh my, no. It'll only cost you fifty cents for a three month's trial subscription.

HIRAM. Wal, that's lettin' a feller off purty reasonable. Cal'late I'll try it for three months anyway. (*Signs name*).

MISS B. (*looking at name*). Hiram Pringle? Can it be you're the same Hiram Pringle that was over to Tewksbury some years ago?

HIRAM. I cal'late that's me. 'Twas jest twenty-seven years ago this winter near as I can recollect,—an' you? Seem's as if your face is kinder familiar. (*Looks at her closely*).

MISS B. Why, don't you remember Sally Brown that used to work in the millinery store?

HIRAM. Wal, I'll be blessed if you ain't. How be ye anyway? (*Shake hands*). Like sellin' magazines better'n makin' hats, eh?

MISS B. Not that, but I couldn't stand the close work and of course a woman that's all alone in the world has to do something for a living.

HIRAM. So you're alone eh? You're an "old maid" and I'm an "old bachelor." Who'd a thought sech a thing when we was back at Tewksbury.

MISS B. We certainly did have some good times, didn't we?

HIRAM. Yes-sir-ee, you're jest a whoopin! Recollect that party us young folks went to over to Pikeville an' got snowbound an' had to stay for three days? Ha! ha! ha! (*Both laugh*). An' the protracted meetin's—*you ain't forgot them?*

MISS B. No, nor the singing school, either.

HIRAM. Neither have I. I cal'late I can sing the do-re-me jest as well as ever. (*If desired, he may start the scale and she may join in*).

MISS B. Say, do you remember Mr. Pope that used to stutter so, and how he used to sing.

HIRAM. Wal, I should say so! Old Zebadiah Pope most be goin' on towards seventy-five now.

MISS B. I heard he'd just got married to a lady 'most forty years younger than he.

HIRAM. Married, eh? Old Zebadiah married! Ha! ha! There's hope for us yet, Sally. An' say, d'ye recollect that question I asked you at that last singin' school? You said you wanted time to think it over, but you never gave me any answer.

MISS B. I've never forgotten it, Hiram.

HIRAM. Wal, I'm waitin' for the answer yet. I've been waiting for it all these years. What d'ye say, Sally—is it *yes* or *no*?

MISS B. I've decided to say *yes*, Hiram. I'm tired of fighting life's battles alone.

HIRAM. Bully for you, Sally! You're the best gal, I know. We'll be hitched as soon as we can get things arranged in proper order an' then you're a comin' here to live in the old homestead.

MISS B. That will be lovely, and I shall not care whether women have the right to vote or not. I shall be satisfied to have you vote for me, Hiram.

HIRAM. We'll have to break the news to—sister. I dunno how she'll like it but who cares—there's room enough here for us all—an' gosh ding it—I feel as happy as a kid. (*Dances about and sings*).

(*Enter JANE*).

JANE. My stars and garters! Hiram Pringle, have you gone crazy or are you intoxicated?

HIRAM. Neither one, my dear sister, unless it be intoxicated with love. Allow me to present to you Miss Sally Brown, the future Mrs. Pringle.

JANE. Well, of all things! What be ye talkin' about, Hiram?

HIRAM. Jest what I said. Miss Brown an' myself are engaged to be married an'--

JANE. Engaged to be married? My land! I've heerd of love at first sight but I never heerd of anything quite so sudden as this.

HIRAM. 'Tain't so very sudden after all. It was over twenty-seven years ago that I fust popped the question to Sally.

MISS B. It was when Mr. Pringle spent the winter at Tewksbury and--

JANE. An' you never told me a word about it?

HIRAM. A feller don't usually mention sech affairs till he finds out how the land lies himself. I've jest got my answer not more'n five minutes ago.

JANE. Wal, I'm glad to meet you, Sally, for Hiram's sake.

MISS B. And I'm very happy to know Hiram's sister.

HIRAM. Then we'll all be happy together, won't we?

JANE. (*Discovering book etc.*) Wal, do look here! I'll bet you've bought something of every single peddler.

HIRAM. You've struck it about right, Jane, but I said I wouldn't buy anything we don't need. Perfumery always comes in handy. (*Hands one bottle to JANE and one to MISS BROWN*). And as for this book I'm going to present it to my sister in honor of her forty-fifth birthday, which occurs tomorrow. (*Hands book to Jane*).

JANE. Hiram Pringle, what d'ye mean a-tellin' of my age.

HIRAM. Wall, it don't need to go any farther. An' here my dear sister, is the Wonderful Hair Renewer guaranteed to banish gray hairs forever. After once using no one would ever take you to be over sweet sixteen. Look at me—not a gray hair to be seen.

JANE. Land sakes! I do believe you're comin' into your second childhood.

HIRAM. I feel like it anyway. I feel as happy as a kid with his first pair of pants.

MISS B. And so do I—I mean just as happy as I was twenty-seven years ago.

JANE. I don't believe either one of ye feel any happier or younger'n I do, an' far's the book goes I don't think we have any use for it. Have we Deacon?

HIRAM. What? Has it gone so far as that?

DEACON. Yes, Hiram we've jest closed the deal. Your sister is comin' to live with me. My rheumatiz is purty nigh gone already'.

HIRAM. How about the hay fever?

DEACON. I cal'late that won't last long after dog days is over.

JANE. An' we'll have a "happy married life" together. Won't we, Deacon?

Yes, dear, as happy as turtle doves. (*Coughs and sneezes*).

MISS B. What will you do with your book now, Hiram?

HIRAM. Don't worry. There may be others that ain't so fortunate as we are.

PAT. (*Advancing from door, L.*) Begorra if no wan wants it I'll be afther takin' it mesilf. I'll jist be afther tachin' me Nora the sacrets of "A Happy Married Life," thot I will.

MISS B. Then we'll all be young lovers once more.

JANE. Thanks to Hiram's peddlers.

CURTAIN

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A farce in one act by Willis N. Bugbee. For 4 males and 2 females. Hiram agrees to look after the peddlers while his sister Jane attends to her baking, and the way he gets taken in is a caution. All ends happily however. Pat, the hired man, and Deacon Pettingill furnish considerable comedy. Time, 30 min. 25 cents,

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The Willis N. Bugbee Co., Syracuse, N. Y.